



State Capitol
Room 224
Jefferson City, MO 65101
573-751-4727

MISSOURI
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
PETER KINDER

Contact: Jerry Dowell
573-751-4010
Jerry.Dowell@ltgov.mo.gov

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 7, 2008

Lt. Governor Kinder Calls for State To Honor Soldiers Sacrifice

Outlines program to help veterans and active duty soldiers

JEFFERSON CITY, MO — Lt. Governor Peter Kinder announced today that Missouri owes a greater commitment to Missouri veterans and its current men and women in active military service. Kinder outlined his plan to assist soldiers, veterans and their family's and was joined by members of the Missouri Veterans Commission and the Governor's Advisory Council for Veterans Affairs.

"So many men and woman have given so much to this great country so we can enjoy freedom. So many families have paid the price for military service. We must honor their memories and their service with action," said Kinder.

"Many families have suffered great burdens and terrible sacrifice when family members are called to active duty to defend freedom. No commitment is more important than honoring the service of those men and women who have risked their lives in service of their country. The state should prioritize and fund these veteran and military programs without new taxes," continued Kinder.

"We have spouses of soldiers and children without the means to receive an education because of the sacrifice their loved ones made to their country," stated Kinder. "Unemployment for returning veterans is way too high. While our brave men and women protect us, they have no protection from burdensome taxes or being penalized financially because of their service."

(More)

“Of the 50,000 Missouri men and women deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan 1 in 3 will face a mental health issue. Veterans are returning home with traumatic brain injuries and other ailments of war that are not adequately being addressed by our veterans care programs,” concluded Kinder.”

Kinder’s military and veteran support program includes:

- Create scholarship programs for children and spouses of Missouri National Guard and Reservists military personnel who give their life or whose injuries cause serious disabilities in the line of duty.

- Create and fund a job training program within the Missouri Veterans Commission and its partnering agencies for returning veterans.

- Provide immediate tax relief for veterans by exempting military pensions from state income tax, to be made permanent this year rather than phased in over 6 years.

- Increase funding for mental health professionals to increase awareness for our troops, their families and new veterans and the programs available to support them in treating traumatic brain injury, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and combat stress.

- Prohibit landlords from charging early departure fees on rental agreements for military families that are mobilized or activated and lower the interest that can be charged on consumer loans for military personnel into Missouri law.

Kinder noted that he supports and will work for passage of a law putting flags at half mast to honor Missouri soldiers killed in active duty.

Kinder was instrumental in the creation of the Missouri Military Family Relief Fund. The Relief Fund makes grants to families of Missouri National Guard or Reserves who have been called to active duty as a result of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 facing financial difficulties.

- Kinder pledged to lead the effort to provide additional funding for Missouri Military Family Relief fund, support services for homeless veterans, and additional funding for the Veteran Service Officers Program to help veterans access benefits to which they are entitled.

- Kinder will continue to push for significant funding increases for veterans homes to provide more Missouri veterans the care they deserve.

- He will work with the legislature to pass 4.5 million for capital improvements at veterans homes, almost 1 million in new funding for pharmaceutical costs at veterans homes and a 2.8 million increase in veteran home funding.

Recently, Lt. Governor Kinder chaired the Governor’s Advisory Council for Veterans Affairs which issued a report detailing strategies for improving the delivery of services to Missouri Veterans and assisting the state in making Missouri a “military friendly state”.